

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

HE-16

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

HE-16

**Standing Committee  
on Heritage, Infrastructure  
and Cultural Policy**

Better Municipal Governance  
Act, 2022

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament

Monday 5 December 2022

**Comité permanent du  
patrimoine, de l'infrastructure  
et de la culture**

Loi de 2022 visant à améliorer  
la gouvernance municipale

1<sup>re</sup> session  
43<sup>e</sup> législature

Lundi 5 décembre 2022

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Chair: Laurie Scott  
Clerk: Isaiah Thorning

Présidente : Laurie Scott  
Greffier : Isaiah Thorning

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE,  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND CULTURAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DU PATRIMOINE,  
DE L'INFRASTRUCTURE  
ET DE LA CULTURE**

Monday 5 December 2022

Lundi 5 décembre 2022

*The committee met at 0900 in committee room 2.*

**BETTER MUNICIPAL  
GOVERNANCE ACT, 2022**

**LOI DE 2022 VISANT À AMÉLIORER  
LA GOUVERNANCE MUNICIPALE**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 39, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et à édicter la Loi de 2022 abrogeant la Loi sur la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Good morning, everyone. The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy will now come to order. We are here to conduct clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022.

We are joined by staff from legislative council, Hansard, and broadcast and recording.

Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak and, as always, all comments should go through the Chair.

Are there any questions before we begin? Seeing none, the Clerk has distributed the amendment packages to all members and staff electronically. Are there any comments or questions to any section or schedule of the bill and, if so, to which section? Seeing none, we will now begin clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

Bill 39 is comprised of three sections, which enact three schedules. In order to deal with the bill in an orderly fashion, I suggest we postpone these three sections in order to dispose of the schedules first. Is there agreement on this? Okay, I see agreement. Thank you.

We're going to start with schedule 1, section 1. If in agreement, we can bundle up to section 5 of schedule 1. All in agreement? Is that okay? Agreed. Debate? No debate—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** My apologies. It's sections 1 to 5 of schedule 1. Any debate? No debate seen. Shall schedule 1, sections 1 to 5 carry? All those in favour, just raise their hands. All those opposed? Schedule 1, sections 1 to 5, is carried.

Moving on to schedule 1, section 6, I believe we have an amendment. I look to MPP McMahon for amendment number 1.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I move that section 6 of schedule 1 to the bill be amended by striking out subsection 226.9.1(3) of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and substituting the following:

“Same

“(3) The head of council shall, in accordance with the regulations, provide to the clerk and to each member of city council,

“(a) a copy of any by-law proposed under subsection (2);

“(b) the head of council's reasons for the proposal; and

“(c) a report from city staff containing their analysis and recommendations on the proposed by-law.”

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Any debate or discussion? MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** As you know—you probably can surmise—I'm not in favour of this bill whatsoever. But if it passes, I would just add that this would be a friendly amendment just to add some accountability and transparency to the strong-mayors section.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Any further debate, discussion? MPP Burch.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'm unsure as to whether this can be salvaged by a report from a staff person, but I would like to ask for a 20-minute recess before we vote.

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** It sounds like an unnecessary delay.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Burch is allowed to ask for a recess of 20 minutes. Upon the 20 minutes, we'll return and vote immediately.

Is there any other debate on section 6 of schedule 1?

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Okay, I can clarify.

Do you want a full 20 minutes?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Yes, please.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Okay.

**Mr. Kevin Holland:** Does there not have to be a vote for a recess?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** No, not to call for a 20-minute recess before a vote.

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** Madam Chair?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Yes, MPP Thanigasalam.

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** I would like to vote on this, to have this recess. We all appear in this committee to have

clause-by-clause, and we really want to have a vote on this so that we can do the business as usual.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I'm afraid I'm given direction from the Clerk that there is no vote on this, when someone calls for a 20-minute recess before a vote to confer.

I've asked if MPP Burch would do a smaller time, and he will not. He wants the full 20 minutes.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I'm going to call for the vote, and then you make your motion. It's the right procedure. Is that okay?

Are all members ready to vote?

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** To vote on—sorry, Madam Chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** On the amendment that's before us, amendment 1.

MPP Burch?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Thank you, Chair. I would ask for a 20-minute recess prior to the vote.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Burch has asked for a 20-minute recess prior to the vote, and it is granted. We will vote immediately upon returning.

There's more debate? MPP Thanigasalam.

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** My apologies, Madam Chair. We really want to have the—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Thanigasalam, I've already called the question, and I can't have any more debate or discussion.

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Twenty-minute recess. *The committee recessed from 0907 to 0927.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Okay. The committee is resuming. We shall now move, as we have said before, right to voting. All those in favour of amendment number 1?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Recorded vote, please.

### Ayes

McMahon.

### Nays

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** The amendment is lost. Shall schedule 1, section 6, carry? Any debate? All those in favour, please raise your hands. All those—

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Recorded vote.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** No, too late. All those opposed? It's carried. Schedule 1, section 6, is carried.

Moving on to schedule 1, section 7: Can we bundle section 7 and section 8? All agreed? Thank you. Is there any debate on schedule 1, section 7 to section 8? Seeing no debate, shall schedule 1, sections 7 and 8, carry?

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You didn't ask fast enough.

All those in favour, please raise your hands. All those opposed, please raise your hands. Schedule 1, sections 7 and 8, is carried.

Moving on to schedule 1 as a whole: There are two notices here. Would you like to speak to the notices, any of the above parties? Okay, the first one is the NDP, so MPP Burch, please.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** We heard from a lot of folks that came in and some former mayors, a lot of people right across—especially the GTA, but right across Ontario—who are extremely worried about this schedule, that it's an attack on democracy.

I think what we clearly established during the committee hearings was that the mayor of Toronto, as he himself admitted, asked for strong-mayor powers after the provincial election. He had a secret meeting with the Premier, who decided to give the mayor of Toronto, at least, and possibly the mayor of Ottawa, special powers to rule over their councils with one third of councillors voting in favour—minority rule—and then didn't mention at all the fact that he had this meeting with the Premier. If the people of Toronto, in particular, had known that Mayor Tory had made this secret deal with the Premier, that election could have gone very, very differently. I think that has been pointed out during the committee hearings. This line that the government has put forward that the mayor of Toronto received this huge majority really falls flat in the face of the fact that people didn't know he had a secret deal with the Premier to give himself more powers.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Burch, I really want you to rephrase that. You mentioned it twice. It's impugning motive, and it's really not proper.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Which part of it, Chair?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** The one about the meeting.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** The secret meeting?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** There you are. Are you going to withdraw, rephrase? What would you like to do here?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'd be happy to rephrase, Chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Please.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** The mayor of Toronto, in the media, said that he requested strong-mayor powers from the Premier. That's a matter of public record. The folks in Toronto were not aware of this, because it wasn't made public—we all know that for a fact—until after the election. The meeting with the Premier where he asked for special powers happened prior to the election. Through the election, it wasn't mentioned, and then, post-election, the mayor of Toronto announced that he had had this meeting with the Premier and that he was in favour of ruling Toronto city council with a one-third minority.

I think most of the speakers we heard from raised the fact that the government members saying that the mayor of Toronto had this strong majority from the election—that vote came without the knowledge that the mayor of Toronto had asked for special powers and the Premier promised those special powers, as was reported in the media, and the

Premier has not contradicted that. So this is a real attack on democracy.

You have five former mayors from all political stripes who came forward and wrote a letter to the mayor begging him not to go forward with this, telling him that they would be there to actually support him in his decisions if he would just tell the Premier that he was not in favour of stronger powers and that he would not use those undemocratic powers. We heard some really impassioned arguments from folks who presented to us.

We also heard from AMO—and I found this really interesting—that even for Bill 3, which didn't even get into the one-third minority, which just gave the mayor veto power, 95% of councillors across Ontario and 75% of all the mayors across Ontario were not even in favour of giving the mayor veto powers. We heard uncharacteristically harsh criticism from AMO here. They were basically horrified that the government has gone forward with this, with no consultation whatsoever with AMO and with the municipalities, to give minority rule for the first time in North America. It's unprecedented, as the Canadian Civil Liberties Association pointed out, to give a government minority rule in a city, in a province, in a country in North America—unprecedented.

So I really implore the government members to think about not just their own political party—this is not something that is a partisan thing. All of the mayors who came forward are from different political parties, from all political stripes, and are opposed to this.

I've talked to people, certainly, in my area of Niagara, which could see stronger powers. The government has said they may go forward with this within the next year to give these minority-rule powers to other municipalities. The mayors in my area said very clearly that we don't need strong-mayor powers. We believe that if a mayor wants to be a strong mayor, they do that by consensus; not by bargaining for special powers and using a third of their councillors to ram things through.

This is clearly, in our opinion, an attempt by the government—when they talk about provincial priorities, they're going to use strong mayors and they're going to use the hammer of appointed regional chairs to carry through on provincial priorities which are completely undefined either in Bill 23 or in Bill 39. Whatever the Premier decides is a provincial priority, that's what the priority is. Those regional chairs had better carry out the bidding of the Premier or they can be reappointed, and the strong mayors—we all know that municipalities can be punished by the provincial government when it comes to funding and things like that, so they have a hammer over them as well.

This completely takes away from any kind of local democracy. As I mentioned, it's the first time in North America that minority rule has ever been established. It sets a horrible precedent at a time, in Canada and right across North America, when respect for democracy and our democratic rights is at an all-time low, when we saw this government come forward with legislation that attempted to suspend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms when it came to collective bargaining. And now we have this attack on democracy.

So we would ask the government members to give a lot of thought to what they're doing here. This is something the people of Ontario are not going to forget. Their political careers may be on the line here if they think that people across Ontario are going to stand for losing their democracy, losing their environment, the greenbelt, collective bargaining rights. These are attacks on working people, and they need to be fought against. There's going to be a price to this government for moving forward with these things.

I'll pass things on to my colleague.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further discussion? We'll go in rotation. MPP McGregor.

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** I'd point out that there's a bit of a troubling trend coming out with the rhetoric from the official opposition.

The housing market is in a deep crisis, driven by decades of inadequate action to increase the supply of houses to meet the demands of our growing country. We know, in Ontario, that when the federal government increases immigration levels to 500,000 in the next few years, the lion's share of them will settle in Ontario, and we actually estimate that about a third of that growth in Ontario will be happening in our two largest cities, which are the city of Ottawa and the city of Toronto.

**0940**

We also know that every month of delay in approval for a project costs up to \$3,300, and that's a per-month number. If you extrapolate that per-month number for a year, that could reach almost \$40,000 per year, which if you extend that over five years is almost \$200,000 just in the costs of delays on a property before a single shovel hits the ground.

I think we need to look at prospective homebuyers, many of whom feel they don't have a voice. We saw, in a few elections, low voter turnout, particularly for millennials, particularly for young people that don't see their priorities reflected by the people that serve them. Our action to give them a chance to one day be able to afford a home is exactly the kind of action that young people get excited about. It's exactly the kind of action that members of this House need to be taking to deal with some of the apathy that we see in the public.

Now, what we have proposed are very prescribed additional tools in the tool kit for specific mayors to advance provincial priorities, which we have said could include affordable housing, but also some of the large investments that need to go into the ground before housing: things like key infrastructure, things like waste water, things like roads and transit so that people can get around.

We know a high number of our residents in Ontario feel unsatisfied with their living conditions for a variety of reasons. One of those reasons could be that they're unable to get to work in a time that they would like. So at a time when we're putting forward as a province record investments in transit, including on the GO train; including GO train service to Niagara, where the member is from; including GO train service to get people into Toronto, which I know the member has indicated is a key priority for him; including historic expansions of the subway lines, which will help people in the downtown core move—we are taking action

to build the Ontario of the future. We want to build the infrastructure and put that in place so that we can get shovels in the ground on houses so that people can afford to live in Ontario, but also afford to get around, and that they're able to get to work and that they have more opportunity.

I would also point out some of the key parts of this bill around finding a way forward on regional government in a place like the city of Brampton, where I'm from, where we constantly have to go cap in hand to the remainder of the region to get projects that are going to benefit our city. I think it makes sense to take a look at how we can make that better. We are a city of 700,000 people, give or take, depending on the number you are using. We're certainly growing; we've doubled in size in the last 20 years and, clearly, the pace of infrastructure and development has not kept pace with that growth. When this government put forward the plan around a new bypass highway for Brampton, very similar to the highway that Mississauga has—in Brampton, we have the 401 on the south and the 410 goes up, but we've got nothing that gets around the city to the 400—we saw, overwhelmingly, councillors that were not from my community come out against that. We saw, with the opposition, that they stoked a lot of the fires to prevent residents in my community from having a highway around the city.

Now during my provincial campaign, every single flyer that I put out talked about building highways, and I say this to mean highway infrastructure, particularly Highway 413, a core aspect of the agenda we put forward, that I promised voters we would put forward. Now, the voters in Brampton overwhelmingly voted for that agenda, that pro-growth, pro-immigrant, pro-development agenda. You see that with my colleague Mr. Hardeep Grewal on my left in Brampton East, where he took out an NDP incumbent. You see that with our associate minister of women's economic and social development, the Honourable Charmaine Williams, where she beat an NDP incumbent.

In my election, I didn't have an NDP incumbent because—and it's funny when the members talk about local democracy—my NDP incumbent kind of had the rug pulled out from underneath him by the party bureaucracy, where they decided that they would call a nomination meeting without telling him. Actually, he recounts the time when he got a phone call saying, “You're going to a nomination. By the way, you don't have time to sign up people.” All that to say, when the members talk about standing up for local democracy, I think there's a lot of opportunity to do that, and I would suggest looking in your own backyard at times.

It's not enough to stand up here and say “not in my backyard.” Sometimes we have to look in our own backyards. And sometimes millennial families and new Canadians want to one day own a backyard.

When we put action in to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years, we're making a commitment to Ontarians that we're going to put their interests first. We're doing it in a way that will be tangible and measurable, certainly in time for our own election. You see the movement. They'll be able to see the number of housing starts and housing construction over the years.

I'd say it's not about chasing the next headline, for the members opposite, although it feels that way sometimes. What we're really trying to do is put tangible progress forward so that Ontarians can look back at the government they elected, including many members of the opposition, albeit less members than they did four years ago—but that all members of the House can look back to the public and showcase, “Here's the work that we did. We promised you that we would get us on track to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years, and we did. We promised to get shovels in the ground on key transit and highway infrastructure to help you move around, and we did. We promised to make the investments in health care to make your life better, and we did.”

So this bill we're putting forward, I think, for everyone as legislators is a key part in getting shovels on the ground on the housing front, but I agree with the member, also on other provincial priorities, which could include some of that key infrastructure.

I think the members here have a real opportunity. The NDP said in the campaign that they would build 1.5 million homes over 10 years. The Liberal Party said that they would build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. The PC Party said that we would build 1.5 million homes over 10 years. Bills like this are a chance to prove that you were serious, a chance to give the tools to the municipal partners that we have that they need to get homes built faster. I would recommend to all members of the committee to think seriously about how they vote on this piece of legislation. I would advise voting for and showing some proof points that you were serious when you spoke about building homes, that it wasn't just empty political rhetoric, but that you were serious. So here's a chance that we have to do that. I recommend to all of my colleagues to vote for this bill and certainly vote for schedule 1. Thank you.

**0950**

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** With regard to my colleague's comments on housing, absolutely, in my eight years at city hall, I was a very pro-housing politician. That's who I am. I'm a doer. I get things done. And I work with anyone. We didn't need strong-mayor powers to do that. I worked with two mayors at Toronto city hall—former mayor Rob Ford and current mayor John Tory—and had good relationships with both of them, and so did my staff. As I said, I reach across party lines and try to work with everyone for the greater good. We sure as heck didn't need these extra powers. Under both mayors, there was communication amongst staff, amongst politicians, and things got done, and they were transparent. People were accountable, and we didn't need these extra powers.

So we can build housing. We can build it in the right places—not the greenbelt, not on prime farmland. We can get those homes built.

I would argue that we need a plethora of housing options. We don't need just single-family detached homes with white picket fences. If you speak to most millennials



and Gen Zs—a lot of Gen Zs are looking for affordable rental. So it's not just home ownership; it's rental, and it's affordable housing. And it's all styles: It's co-ops, which we know have been a proven success in the world, in Ontario especially; multi-unit, multi-residential high-rise units; rental for purchase; quadplexes, triplexes, duplexes—shaking up that yellowbelt, which has been a problem, retaining these invisible gates around these single-family homes.

I would even urge the government to be gutsier and bolder and not just be proposing three units per site—because you can do that now. Where's the innovation? Let's go forward.

If we really want to get things done, let's look in our own backyards at provincial properties. It was mentioned to us: the LCBO. Look at parking lots. We shouldn't have surface parking lots in downtown Toronto. We can have parking, but do it underground, like they do in Manhattan, and build housing overtop. Talk to churches. There are lots of priorities there. See what they can do. Can we partner with them for housing as well?

Housing can get built. We don't need Bill 39 to do that.

We've heard from the Ottawa mayor. He doesn't want it. We've heard from Ottawa residents. They don't want it. They passed a resolution recently at council.

I would argue that when I was working with the current mayor, Mayor Tory, we didn't need it. We got things done. We worked collaboratively; the whole council did. Yes, votes were lost, but not every vote is won. That's called democracy.

We have a bunch of brand new city councillors. Imagine you're a city councillor and you're so excited to be in your office, you worked hard to get there, you have fresh energy and ideas, and then all of a sudden the rug is pulled from underneath you and you're told your vote doesn't matter because now minority rules—and we heard that. That has never been done in North America. So why do we need it? Why would we set that precedent when we don't need it and we have fresh voices and energy and ideas that can contribute and work collaboratively and collegially?

This sets a huge tone of divisiveness in a world that's already, unfortunately, getting quite divisive. It's not a way to bring people together at all. And it's unnecessary. That is the word of the day: “unnecessary.” We heard from umpteen people speaking against it or writing in, if you read all the written submissions. We heard from former mayors. We heard from residents' associations. We heard from the average citizen. We heard from all kinds of organizations. People don't want this. They find it anti-democratic. They're shocked, actually, to see that this is happening in our city. It's never been done before.

So I would just say again: Why do we need this? Why are we doing this? I'll get into the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve later. That will be a whole spiel on that—if you ever want to eat again. But I'm just saying, 1.5 million homes can be built. We can work together on that. But we don't need Bill 39 to do so.

Thank you for listening so intently, MPP McGregor. I appreciate that. I really do.

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** I appreciate you.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Anytime.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate or discussion? MPP Pang.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** I heard several words that kept repeating: “unprecedented,” “unnecessary,” and whatever. I think all the parties in this room put forward 1.5 million homes in 10 years. It was unprecedented in the platforms. There are a lot of unprecedented things that happened in the last few months. All of us agree that we need to move forward and we need to move fast.

So, say, for example—I put this in this way—we all are driving. We have a car. Do you know how fast we can drive if we press, all of us, on the gas pedal? It can go up to 240 and 260 kilometres per hour. But are we going to try that? No, in normal times. But if there's a tsunami chasing us at the back, we will do our best to floor our gas to try to run as fast as possible, even if there is a street sign saying 40 maximum. Right?

In this unprecedented time, we all agree that there's a tsunami at the back that we have to take care of. Yes, we need to discuss. We have to talk about it. That's why we are here. But we need to move fast. Since we need to move fast, we need to give the municipalities some tools that they need to use. Yes, in normal times, we look at the speed: maximum 30, maximum 40, maximum 100. We follow it, no problem at all. But during unprecedented times, it's different. So therefore, I fully support our Bill 39.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? MPP Bell.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'm very concerned about schedule 1 of Bill 39. It is a fundamental attack on democratic norms and the basic premise of representative democracy. The whole premise of representative democracy is that laws are passed using majority rule. So, citizens get their say. They have their voice. Elected representatives who have been elected to represent their area get to represent their constituents properly. And this government is doing away with that.

What I find so disturbing is that this government is choosing to do this in a way where it doesn't just apply to Toronto and Ottawa. This government can just choose to apply it to any municipality it wants through regulation. It could be coming to Thunder Bay. It could be coming to Brampton. It could be coming to York region. That's extremely concerning.

I recall in committee, and I'm sure you do too, when AMO came and spoke to us and said that AMO's board is unanimously opposed to Bill 3. AMO represents the over 400 municipalities across Ontario, and they're telling you they don't want it. Yet, Bill 39 is changing how they make decisions. I honestly can't imagine that you think that that's a good idea. It is a terrible idea.

CCLA came in, and they spoke about how there is no municipality or province or state in North America that uses minority rule to pass legislation. Ontario is going to be an alarming first. That's going to be this government's legacy, and that is appalling, because it affects all of us.

It is also very concerning to hear the members opposite say that this is necessary because we need to address the housing crisis. This is not the way to address the housing

crisis. The way to address the housing crisis is to listen to your government's own Housing Affordability Task Force. They were very clear. Some of the recommendations—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'll be looking forward to having you speak next, sir.

**1000**

Some of the recommendations that were in the Housing Affordability Task Force, including measures to encourage and spur the construction of the missing middle—townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes. You've taken some steps in Bill 23 to move forward on that. Many people who spoke on Bill 23 argue that you haven't gone far enough.

It is a myth that building 50,000 homes on greenbelt land is going to solve the housing affordability crisis. We can all do a Google search and look at how much those homes are going to cost. I'd say upwards of \$1 million. People who can afford a \$1-million home are not the people who are most affected by our housing affordability crisis right now. It's low-income people, it's middle-income people, it's moderate-income people who are suffering the burden of the housing affordability crisis.

Renters: There is nothing in Bill 39 that indicates you're going to help renters, people on social assistance or seniors on fixed income. Where in Bill 39 is a plan to build affordable housing on public land? When I look at the secretive deals or I hear about the secretive deals in the media about this government's plans to use Metrolinx land to build housing, there's no affordable housing requirements in any of the developments you've approved and moved forward on. From Mimico to the development in Premier Ford's own backyard at Woodbine—no affordable requirements in any of them. The people who are going to benefit most from those kinds of developments are the developers who are signing secret deals with this government to get 600-square-foot condos built.

Where are the measures to improve rent control so we don't have people moving to Ontario moving into a new rental and then suddenly getting dinged with a big rent increase, because they didn't realize they're living in an apartment that wasn't protected by rent control, and then they get economically evicted. I'm sure you have friends who have been in that position, or maybe you don't. I certainly do. Where's that? That's an effective way to address housing affordability. I'm not seeing you move forward on that. In fact, I see this government making it worse. It's very concerning.

Where's the plan to address housing speculation in our housing market? Currently, it's very easy for an individual to equity-out their home and buy another home, and then another home and then another home, which makes it really hard for a first-time homebuyer to compete, because the deposit they're raising is based on income, it's not based on money that they can get. That's led to a situation where people who are the top purchasers of homes in Ontario today are investors driving up housing prices. That's one of those root-cause issues that this government should and could be addressing. But you're not.

You talk a little bit about the non-resident speculation tax. You've made some moves there, but the issue with a non-resident speculation tax is that it only takes a small percentage of the market. You're not dealing with some of those bigger issues. That's very concerning.

Then, I see Bill 39. You're wrapping yourselves in the flag of "We're going to address housing affordability," but really all you're doing is taking away our democratic norms. Five former mayors from Toronto—John Sewell, David Crombie, David Miller—wrote an open letter to John Tory saying, essentially, "What are you doing? This is a disastrous move. You know full well, and so do we, that you don't need these powers to get stuff done." John Tory has made a mistake as well, but this government has also made a mistake by enabling that. Ottawa's mayor didn't ask for it.

And what's also concerning is that this government hasn't even clearly identified in regulation or law what your provincial priorities are. It's still a myth; it's still secret. We don't even know what your mandate letters are. You're talking on and on and on about how these powers can be used by Toronto and Ottawa for provincial priorities, but we don't even know what the provincial priorities are. It's left vague and undefined, such as transit, such as housing. Why don't you write them down so at least there's some clear transparency about that? Maybe you know what they are. Maybe they've been said in a caucus meeting. But nobody else does.

You've created the situation with this bill where you can have any municipality you want declared as being able to use strong-mayor powers. Twin it with Bill 3 and it means they can pass a budget with just one-third support, which is terrible—in some ways it's worse than this bill—veto legislation, and then come up with laws and pass them with just minority rule. Any municipality you want, you just—tick tick tick—regulation, write it in. It's very concerning.

I urge you to oppose schedule 1. This is going to be your legacy, and it's an appalling one. I urge you to oppose it.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate or discussion? MPP Burch.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I don't want to repeat things that I've already said, and my colleague has—

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** But you're going to.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'm actually not.

My colleague has done a great job covering especially the housing part of this. There has to be some kind of hierarchy of priorities, and jeopardizing our democratic rights for anything you call a crisis, whether it's housing or health care or anything else, I think is something that the people of Ontario are not going to take kindly to.

The one thing I tried to bring out during our committee hearings that I'd just like to say, about the expansion of these strong-mayor powers to other municipalities in Ontario, which the Premier has said he's planning on, is that I don't think it's going to even work the way the government thinks it's going to. In my experience—as I've said many times through the committee hearings—as a former councillor, I'll tell you, if the mayor of our municipality ever tried to

use powers like this, whether he had them or not, you would not see much getting done at that council for a long, long time.

The first time you see a mayor in Ontario try and use these powers I think you're going to see a huge backlash, because for a mayor to want to use these powers, he must already know that he doesn't have a majority—he or she—of their council. So putting these powers into effect means they already know that they don't have the support of their democratically elected council. When a mayor tries to ram through a bylaw or a budget and two thirds of their council is against it, what you're going to see is a backlash, and everything else that the mayor tries to do, whether it's a provincial priority or not, is going to be opposed.

The Premier, I think, sees things through a Toronto lens. He's a former councillor. We can certainly have a discussion about what kind of success he had as a councillor—and, my goodness, imagine if strong-mayor powers were in during that time. I've read the book *Crazy Town*. Heaven only knows what would have happened.

I don't think this is going to turn out throughout the other municipalities of Ontario like this Premier and this mayor with their secret deal thought it would.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Sure. I had forgotten to mention a couple of things about housing when I was speaking. One thing I'm very proud of doing when I was a Toronto city councillor—and we did it in under two years, so stuff can happen, and it can happen very quickly—is the laneway suites housing policy. Toronto was lagging behind other municipalities across Canada and North America. I was out visiting my brother in Vancouver and saw these beautiful laneway homes which animated the laneways. If you speak to anyone in emergency services—fire, paramedics, police—they say that they love having eyes on the community, eyes in the back lanes, so they like laneway housing; it helps them with security and safety, and also helps them identify homes when they, unfortunately, need to find them in emergencies.

1010

And so, I did that with another councillor, former deputy mayor Ana Bailão, who has done phenomenal work with housing, so it can be done without having a strong-mayor system. It can be done. We worked extensively, did a phenomenal amount of community engagement right across the city, all types of innovative engagement. We did walks and talks; we did tours; we had university students helping us; we had Evergreen Brick Works doing some work for us, as well as outside private sector gurus—architects and planners—who loved the concept of laneway housing, and it was done in under two years. It passed through city council unanimously. So it can—

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Why do we have the crisis?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Sorry?

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Why do we have the crisis?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP McMahon has the floor.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** That's just one tool—but thank you so much for your support, to my colleague. He's so supportive, tremendously supportive. I really appreciate it over the time I've been here.

So we do have a housing crisis; that was just one little tool in the tool box that I helped move at city hall without strong-mayor abilities, which is my point. We don't need them. We can build the housing; we can do it in the right spot. We do not need Bill 39 to do so. We need people with chutzpah.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Any further debate or discussion? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Shall schedule 1 carry?

**Ayes**

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Burch, McMahon.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I declare schedule 1 carried.

Moving to schedule 2: We can bundle section 1 to section 8 of schedule 2. Is there agreement? Thank you.

Any debate or discussion? Seeing none—

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Recorded vote.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Shall schedule 2, sections 1 to 8, carry?

**Ayes**

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Burch.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Schedule 2, sections 1 to 8, is carried.

Shall schedule 2 carry? Would you like to debate to your notices? MPP Burch on the schedule 2 notice.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Clearly, this is an extremely controversial schedule and we've seen protests all over Ontario over the weekend, especially in Conservative Party ridings, where people are appalled over the government's insistence on trying to pass a schedule that not only takes away democratic rights, as we just argued—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I'm sorry I have to interrupt the member, but it is 10:15 and we'll stand recessed until 1 p.m.

*The committee recessed from 1015 to 1300.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Good afternoon, everyone. We're resuming committee on Bill 39, and I believe that MPP Burch was speaking to schedule 2 of section 8.

**Interjection:** No, just schedule 2.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Just schedule 2. I'm so sorry.

Please resume, if you wish.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Thank you very much, Chair. I do have a few more words to say.

Schedule 2 repeals the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act and transfers, in our estimation, nearly two thirds of a billion dollars in wealth from the public to one PC donor: the De Gasperis family. It also allows the destruction of 4,500 acres of prime greenbelt farmland that further accelerates the loss of farmland, of which 319 acres are being lost every day, and it undermines the integrity of Ontario's precarious natural and agricultural systems, putting our food security further at risk. I think we heard that time and time again from the various presenters last week in committee.

It's interesting to note that because of the rushed nature of this bill in consultations, we're just getting a lot of feedback coming in, and it's interesting, the folks who just sent some feedback—you know, folks you wouldn't always expect. This was the society of professional engineers that strongly opposes greenbelt changes, and they said, "The Ontario engineering community strongly opposes the proposed building on protected greenbelt lands. Converting greenbelt lands to residential development will hinder Ontario's carbon targets without providing enough economic return, nor reducing the cost of buying a ... home." That's the society of professional engineers—not necessarily a partisan group, that's for sure, but folks who are very much concerned about the numbers and about issues of sustainability.

Also interesting to note, we recently got a chance to look at some input from Parks Canada, who provided a technical response to the proposed removal of lands from the greenbelt. I was just completely shocked that this government—I mean, I can understand how there are political realities. They may not want to talk to this group or that group, but to not confer at all with Parks Canada—I mean, not at all—is absolutely incredible.

They had to say: "The provincially-protected greenbelt lands immediately adjacent to Rouge National Urban Park provide important habitat (nesting areas, breeding grounds, overwintering locations) and ecological connectivity to critical habitat for dozens of species at risk, as well as vital ecosystem services for nature, water and agriculture. They are also critical to the health and function of Rouge National Urban Park, which has a mandate to protect natural, cultural and agricultural heritage landscapes. As the provincial government is well aware, the greenbelt lands, along with Rouge National Urban Park, together contribute to the ecological connection between the Oak Ridges moraine and Lake Ontario—the only intact, contiguous connection between the two in the entire greater Golden Horseshoe."

They go on to say: "Of specific concern to Parks Canada are greenbelt lands immediately adjacent to Rouge National Urban Park, also known as the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve, which border the Townline Swamp Wetland Complex ... located in the Pickering area of Rouge National Urban Park. The complex is arguably the most ecologically-sensitive area of the national urban park and

is home to dozens of federally and provincially endangered and threatened species, including bank swallow, eastern meadowlark, wood thrush, red-headed woodpecker, monarch butterfly and several species of bats, as well as other rare species.

"As in the opinion of Parks Canada the consultation requirement surrounding these changes has not yet been met by Ontario, Parks Canada would like to highlight for discussion the following as risks we have identified, and requests an opportunity to meet and discuss these items at the earliest opportunity."

There are four very interesting points, Chair. I can't believe that this government didn't even have the forethought to speak to the federal government agency about the effects to this park.

One of them—I'm not going to go through all of them; it's a pretty detailed letter. But I'm going to read their concern regarding First Nations:

"As a foundational practice in the administration of Rouge National Urban Park, Parks Canada works closely with 10 First Nations communities—via the Rouge National Urban Park First Nations Advisory Circle—with a historic, cultural and present-day connection to the Rouge Valley on all aspects of park planning and development"—on all aspects of park planning and development. "The First Nations advisory circle consists of: the seven Williams Treaties First Nations (Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation; Hiawatha First Nation; Alderville First Nation; Curve Lake First Nation; Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation; Chippewas of Rama First Nation; Beausoleil First Nation) as well as the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Huron-Wendat Nation. We wish to support this advisory circle in outlining Parks Canada's understanding that the adjacent greenbelt lands are of strong interest to many Indigenous peoples, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who have submitted a land claim for unextinguished title (the Rouge River Valley tract claim) on lands that overlap the boundaries of Rouge National Urban Park and the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve greenbelt lands."

So in addition to some very, very serious concerns that Parks Canada has for endangered species, it's clear that this government has not met its obligation to First Nations. We talk a lot about respect for First Nations and treaty rights, but we have to walk the talk as well, and this government is not doing that.

It says, "In closing, we request a meeting with the province"—it's unbelievable that they haven't had a meeting yet—"in line with section 2.09 in the memorandum of agreement ... between Ontario and Parks Canada respecting the establishment of Rouge National Urban Park, to discuss the greenbelt land removal and development proposal at your earliest convenience." Well, this was almost into December when this letter was put together. It's absolutely incredible that this government hasn't even bothered to talk to Parks Canada or, obviously, the First Nations communities that are impacted.

I'm not going to go on with that entire letter, but we are going to speak about it when this goes back to debate in

the House, and about this government's refusal to live up to its obligations to consult, including with First Nations.

I'm going to wrap up just by pointing out that we've had a lot of feedback from this area, including citizens' groups in the area who have been fighting to protect greenbelt land in Pickering and the surrounding area for many, many years. They've told us that the two-thirds of a billion dollars in wealth being transferred to the De Gasperis brothers isn't being created out of thin air. They want us to understand that it's being stolen from the public, who bought and paid for the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve farmland protections when these public lands were sold at discounted prices with easements protecting them as farmland in perpetuity. The people of Ontario bought and paid for an investment in the protection of the province's natural and agricultural systems, and this investment has real monetary value—probably \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion or more, in the case of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

The Ford government is giving this public investment away to its friends and donors for basically nothing. Not only is this a gift to powerful PC donors, it's a theft from the people of Ontario. The government's repeal of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act and the subsequent transfer—

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I think that, again, impugning motive and then those comments I mentioned this morning—I'd like you to rephrase and not impugn.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Sure, I'll rephrase. The government's repeal of that act and the subsequent transfer of public wealth to private landowners and PC donors without compensation represent, in our opinion, an appalling breach of the standards of responsibility and conduct expected of public office holders entrusted with serving the public interest. Those are the words of the folks in the area.

1310

I'm going to leave it there, Chair, but I'm going to pass it over to my colleagues who I'm sure have a lot to say about this.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate and discussion? MPP Thanigasalam.

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** A lot of aspects of this particular bill are a response to the elected mayor from Pickering—records from outgoing and also incoming mayors of the city of Pickering.

We are proposing these acts just to make sure we fulfill the 1.5 million homes in the next decade. That's the overall goal here. We got elected with a bigger mandate from the people of Ontario: They want shovels in the ground to get things going and start building infrastructure in Ontario.

This bill also has a city-wide mandate for the city of Toronto—and as I mentioned earlier in this committee, Mayor John Tory got elected with a city-wide mandate, not just a particular ward or neighbourhood. In total, he got more votes than all the councillors in combination, or by 36,000 more than the 25 councillors in the city of Toronto.

To speak about this particular bill, Bill 39—as three millennial MPPs sitting on this committee, we heard from our friends, we heard from residents, and the talk is that they cannot afford to find a home. They will probably have to wait for the next 23 years to save in order to purchase a house, according to the new report that just came out. So we have a mandate to fulfill to make sure that we serve all Ontarians, including seniors who want to downsize, including millennials who want to realize the dream of a home for themselves.

My colleagues in this committee on this side have mentioned that the federal government recently has announced that they're going to bring 500,000 new Canadians to Canada, and the majority of them, 60% or so, are going to find Ontario as their home, to find good-paying jobs and raise their families.

So we have a goal, and of course our goal is a transformative goal. That's why we have to break the status quo. We have to be bold. That's why we are bringing this.

I can just give a quick quote from the Pickering mayor. He said, "I would also like to support and thank you and your government for your efforts in proposing the removal of the Cherrywood Area Lands from the greenbelt plan and in proposing to repeal the Central Pickering Development Plan. In light of this planned residential and commercial growth, I am encouraged that your ministry will ultimately augment and strengthen the greenbelt by adding 9,400 acres," the Pickering mayor is mentioning, to the greenbelt.

So they are elected by the people, and Mayor Tory—they are also elected by the city of Toronto residents.

Madam Chair, we really want to move forward with building the 1.5 million houses. We cannot afford to have further delays, because the housing crisis has been in the making from the last decade; it didn't happen overnight.

For example, in Scarborough, we didn't have a subway for 30-plus years. Finally, in the last term, our government passed a bill and now shovels are in the ground and things are moving. We are actually building subways after 30 years, and the official opposition voted against it.

Now we're trying to pass a bill to build more houses, and now we are seeing delays—to put more delays, to put more hurdles so that this bill is going to be delayed as well.

So my proposal to this committee is to support this bill in this committee so that we can take it and we can put shovels in the ground to build 1.5 million homes.

On top of that—I have really, really wanted to talk about this for a long time, but I think this is the right time. When I got elected in Scarborough—Rouge Park and I was looking at all of the files, one of the bigger files, obviously, is health care. When I looked at the city of Toronto, because Scarborough—Rouge Park is part of the city of Toronto—we are the east end. We're always the forgotten part of the city of Toronto. The last time a medical school was built in the city of Toronto was—if I asked you all to make a guess, I don't think anyone would get it, because the last time a medical school was built in Toronto was 1847, Madam Chair. Not 1947—1847. Guess who is supporting to build a brand

new medical school in Scarborough? It's our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford. We are building a brand new medical school and we have secured the medical seats, and the opposition voted against it.

I have an obligation as an elected official to go back to my residents and tell them what exactly we are doing to build Ontario, to build infrastructure like subways, to build a medical school. And now, we want to build 1.5 million homes, because seniors want to downsize, millennials want to find a home for themselves, and we're going to have new Canadians who are going to find the GTA as their future home to raise their kids. This is a mandate that we are all fighting for.

I hope we can move forward with this bill without any further delays, because people are tired of seeing these delays. People are tired of all of the meetings and looking at all the reports but not taking action. And this time, in June, people made it crystal clear. They gave a profound mandate for our government to take action, and that's why we are sitting on this side, to get the work done so we can move on.

I urge the official opposition and independent member to look into this, to get shovels in the ground to build 1.5 million houses. We have talked about all sorts of details in this committee. Even if you look at the GTA area or look at urban areas that the members opposite are coming from, we are building the Ontario Line here, we are building subways here and we are building transit-oriented communities to bring, again, attainable houses, to have more units so that people can find somewhere to live and seniors can downsize and have a beautiful life. That's exactly what we're doing. We're not just talking about suburban areas, we're not just talking about rural areas; we're also talking about urban areas. That's exactly where the transit-oriented communities are coming. That is also part of the housing plan.

It's a multi-ministerial approach, Madam Chair. This is not just a one-lens or one-silver-bullet approach. This is a multi-ministerial approach. As you know very well, we have to have innovative solutions and also bold action to get things done. Otherwise, we're going to remain in the same status quo that Ontarians have seen for the last 15-plus years. That's exactly why we really, really urge the members opposite to vote in favour of this bill and get things moving.

Again, thank you for the opportunity, Madam Chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I would agree with the member opposite—a nice, eloquent speech, thank you—but I would say, innovation does not equal destruction, and that's what we're looking at with Duffins Rouge.

We are with you on housing. I don't think anyone in the chamber disputes the housing crisis or is reluctant to build, build quickly, build a lot of housing and all types of housing—but in the right places, in existing communities, not on class 1 farmland. That's the dispute. It's not over building housing. We're with you. We want to build. Build

it now. We should have done it years ago, didn't, but here we are.

**1320**

We have heard from an endless amount of people, and not a lot in support. People are concerned about the lack of consultation. The member beside me beat me to it with Parks Canada. It's unbelievable that we haven't spoken to Parks Canada, especially with the Rouge right next door—which is in your neighbourhood, to the member opposite me—and are not consulting properly with our Indigenous communities. We're trying to do better with truth and reconciliation, and this does not do better. So that's alarming, the lack of consultation there.

In the chamber, many of the members across and other members of the government speak affectionately and respectfully of respecting farmers, and we're not doing that with Bill 39. Duffins Rouge is “the” agriculture preserve, the only one in Ontario, so why would we jump into that and try to destroy it and bulldoze over it for homes? That's unnecessary.

Peggy Brekveld was here the other day from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and she speaks so eloquently and passionately. She spoke about how their federation represents over 38,000 farmers from across the province, representing \$47 billion in provincial annual GDP, from field to fork, and over 200 different products. They're worried. The Durham Region Federation of Agriculture, the York Region Federation of Agriculture, as well as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, are very worried about Bill 39. They agree: Build housing, build it now, build it quickly, build it sustainably in existing communities. But don't build it on farmland. There's absolutely no need to build it on farmland.

So they're opposing Bill 39 and saying that Duffins Rouge needs to remain intact. They go on to say, “Less than 5% of Ontario landscape is arable land. The best is often located” near “cities.” We heard this morning from the member beside me in her speech in the chamber that we are only one of seven regions in the world that has the ability to export food, because we grow more than we need. “Ontario contains 52% of Canada's prime agricultural land.” They're reminding us: “Farmland is precious.” So don't touch it.

The Duffins is 5,200 acres of farmland, bordered on three sides by urban development. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture acknowledges that Ontario needs to build more housing, just not there. It's a ridiculous proposal, to build over farmland.

“Farmland is a finite resource,” they say. “But it is also perpetual. Meaning if we protect farmland, take care of it, we can grow food for generations.” We want to feed these people we're building housing for. So you've heard from them, and you've heard from Parks Canada.

Another letter I would alert you to that you may not have seen is from our former chief planner for the city of Toronto. He's quite famous and reputable globally, Paul Bedford, and he has a letter with, gosh, over 50 planning professionals who are based in Ontario and across the country, with extensive leadership and experience in both

public and private sector. I'm not sure if you saw that letter from, actually, Paul Bedford and Dana Anderson. It's a group of, as I mentioned, over 50 planning professionals. They agree with you on housing and agree with us on housing. But, again, they're saying, not on farmland. They have a little stat:

"The city of Toronto has and continues to adopt planning strategies that intensify development at higher order transit locations, main streets and missing middle infill in all neighbourhoods. According to the June 2021 Toronto City Planning Profile TO publication, between 2016-2020, 503,362 residential units were proposed and a total of 93,836 residential units were constructed." In Toronto alone, potential housing for the residential units that have been proposed is 700,000 units, which "represents almost half of the entire 1.5 million housing units your government wants to see built over the next 10 years."

So Toronto is doing it, and they're doing it in the right places. They're doing it in existing neighbourhoods—walkable, sustainable neighbourhoods, which you're seeing intensify; transit-oriented neighbourhoods—and are continuing to create them.

I have Main Street—if you've ever been to my riding. I would love to tour you around beautiful Beaches—East York. We could do a cross-tour: "B" for Brampton, "B" for Beaches—East York.

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Summertime.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** It's beautiful in winter, as well.

Main Street is a mobility hub, with the GO train, streetcars, subway station, buses—you name it. We're building up there continually, but we can build better. I think of the Danforth as—often, in many places, it only has two storeys. That's ridiculous. Look at Paris, look at Europe—six, eight, 10 storeys. Build up our avenues. There are your units. You can do that all across Toronto and other cities, as well—but you're not doing it on farmland. So it can be done.

The last thing I will read to you about this letter—I could read the whole thing to you, but I'm sure you've memorized it or given it a lengthy read:

"The greenbelt is the wrong place to achieve housing development goals. We strongly urge the government to concentrate its efforts in existing urban areas and to maintain the greenbelt in its entirety—Ontario's housing needs can be met without touching the greenbelt.

"Yours sincerely,  
"Ontario Planners"

I don't know if anyone has a planning degree here; I sure don't, but I wish I did—maybe in my next life. But there you go: 50 very reputable planning professionals, and I'm sure there are umpteen more who would side with that.

As I said, we can be innovative, but innovation does not equal destruction. There's no need to go into Duffins Rouge. We've heard it from the farmers. We've heard it from the planners. We've heard it from an endless amount of residents, as you note in our summary. People are saying—your own housing task force. Why would you

create that task force if you're not going to listen to them? That's a colossal waste of money, resources, time. It's actually disrespectful to the people on the task force that you commissioned this and encouraged it to be created and then just toss it aside or leave it on a shelf to collect cobwebs. I don't know why, if you went to that much trouble, you wouldn't listen to it. They're saying that you can build, that you can absolutely achieve your goals. We all want to achieve these housing goals, just not on farmland.

Someone else said, "The Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve provides environmental services, such as promoting biodiversity."

We have COP15 going on in Montreal right now, and the focus is on biodiversity. We're losing so many species at a rapid rate. It's alarming. So why would we go into Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve?

And then, of course, we've heard from the farmers.

I could go on and on, and I know you would love that, but I'll just say: Let's build the housing. Let's do it together. Just leave the greenbelt and Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve alone.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? MPP McGregor.

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Thanks for the time.

I appreciate the presentation from my colleague, but I think we respectfully disagree, when my colleague says that she shares our goal of building houses. I can appreciate that maybe that appeared in the Liberal platform, as it appeared with the NDP, but the fact is that every single measure that this government has put forward to increase housing supply and to assist more Ontarians with the dream of home ownership has been opposed by this member, by her party, and by the members of the official opposition. So I think we can agree on the number, but I think we vastly disagree on how important it is. On this side of the House and in our party, getting more millennial families and more new Canadians into the housing market is a top priority, but we don't seem to see that shared with our friends from the other side of the House.

**1330**

I would mention that the member spoke a little bit about agriculture, and I can't express enough—to any of the farmers who are watching at home, I can't express enough to you how much this PC government has your back. We know that farmers had our backs throughout the entire pandemic when there were questions drawn about supply chains. We didn't know exactly how our food system was going to make it through, and farmers unanimously stepped up to keep Ontarians fed, to make sure that we were able to feed our families, that we were able to feed our friends and able to feed ourselves. Thank you. The same way you should always thank a farmer—if you ate today, you should be thanking a farmer.

Now, we did release our new Grow Ontario Strategy. Our agricultural minister did mention that, and the reason I'm saying this is to make clear as we debate Bill 39—I want to express that obviously Bill 39 fits in a broader

context of actions that the government is taking on all sectors, especially for the agri-food sector. Our Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs was joined by our Minister of Red Tape Reduction and the parliamentary assistants to announce the release of the province's Grow Ontario Strategy, which is to build a strong, secure food supply chain and secure Ontario's position as a food leader in Canada with our strategy. Now, this strategy outlined the province's plan to strengthen the sector, to ensure an efficient, reliable and responsive food supply and address ongoing vulnerabilities through new innovations by focusing on three priorities. If the committee would indulge me, I'll speak a little bit about those three priorities.

One of them is strengthening agri-food supply chain stability by increasing both the consumption and the production of food grown and prepared in Ontario by 30%, to increase Ontario's food and beverage manufacturing GDP by 10% and boost Ontario's agri-food exports 8% annually by 2032. What we'll notice about that date, I think, is very telling to the members here. When we're talking about our targets on agri-food, we're setting those up so that the future of Ontario is sustainable and that Ontarians are able to eat for years to come. Now that's about 10 years in the future, which is very similar to the targets we're setting around housing. What we're saying, and what members of this House are putting forward, is that you can do both. You can support our agricultural sector, you can support farmers the way that this PC government has done every single day, but you can also stand up for prospective homeowners who want to achieve the dream of home ownership. You can do both. We can build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. We can increase our agricultural food gross domestic product and our output and our exports in that same 10-year period, and we can do both at the same time.

I'd also talk about our move to increase agri-food technology and adoption. We're going to be boosting research infrastructure, advancing the uptake of new technologies, growing the market for Ontario innovative technologies domestically and globally, and grow the use of data to support efficiencies in the agri-food sector in the value chain so we can do things better. The same approach that we have taken yesterday is not the same approach that we need to take tomorrow. It's not the same approach that we need to take the year after that or the 10 years after that.

We know through the growth of research and technology that we'll be able to increase our output, but at the same time we know that investing in research and supporting our research and innovation sector—that people doing that work are going to need somewhere to live. The students of today are going to be the homebuyers of tomorrow, but they never will be if we don't do things to get it done by building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

The actions we're taking here are going to—I can't express enough to members of this committee how much this will do to deal with some of the apathy that we see right now from young voters. When I knocked on doors—

I'd been an activist for various political campaigns in my life; I'd never knocked on doors for myself. When I knocked on doors in my own neighbourhood I grew up in, by myself as a candidate, I was overwhelmed by the amount of people my age who were living in basements or living with their parents in the neighbourhood we all grew up in.

The average house in Ontario was well on its way, at that point during the election, to a million dollars—the average house in Brampton, sorry. It hit a million dollars in August this summer. To correct the record: Brampton, specifically. That means that people who are working good jobs, great jobs—\$75,000 a year, \$85,000 a year—are still being priced out of the market. They still can't live in the neighbourhood that they grew up in and love. Quite frankly, the reason for that is because the supply of our houses hasn't kept pace with our growing population.

We need to make sure that we're building all types of housing. Density near transit areas: Absolutely, we need to do that. We did that in a bill earlier, Bill 23, which these members did not support. Having improved gentle density: Absolutely. We took a massive step forward on as-of-right zoning in the last legislation that these members of this committee voted against.

What we're also looking at are other places where people can live, where it makes sense, where the land is serviced and ready to be developed. That's exactly what we're doing with some of the changes that we're pursuing. But again, we can do two things at once. We can build houses for future generations. We can protect our agricultural sector; we can protect our environment as well.

I'll note through the Chair that our government's plan on the greenbelt is adding 2,000 net new acres, including the Paris-Galt moraine, which needs to be protected. We get that. Of course it needs to be protected, and you can do both.

With regard to our climate targets, about the environment, that's another proof point. Ontario is one of the only provinces in Canada that's well on its way to hitting our Paris accord agreements. You can fight climate change through investing in better ways to make steel; through investing in electric vehicles, the vehicles of the future, and electric batteries—including in my own community in Brampton but also in a lot of other communities. You can protect the environment but you can still reliably partner with industry. You can build economic opportunity and you can build houses that, one day, people might be able to afford.

What we have an opportunity to do here is to allow some more of those homes for people that want to own them to have the option to do so. We're short about 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. We need to build 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years to get our market back to stability. And we know that the cost of development charges, which we've addressed through Bill 23, which the members did not support—that's going to help. We know that dealing with some of the municipal delays—every month of delay on a house project can cost up to \$3,300 per month. If you factor that in, over the year, that's



\$40,000 per year. That's five years of delays. That's almost \$200,000 before a single shovel hits the ground—never mind commodity prices, never mind labour, never mind any of the other regulatory concerns.

We know in the province that it's not all municipal delays. Sometimes there are provincial delays as well, and we've been keen to tackle those. We actually want to hear more about some of those problems so that we can tackle them further, because we know this isn't about the province versus the municipality versus the federal government. This is about building a province and a country and cities that are livable for people that, right now, are priced out of the market. It's going to take all sorts of political leadership from all sides, from all levels of government, to work together collaboratively. It's going to take that kind of decisive leadership. And some of these decisions are going to be tough, because we know that we're going up against the status quo. Going up against the status quo has never been easy, but we're willing to take that on. That's what we are tackling here today.

I would advise the members to please reconsider their position and consider supporting this bill. This is a bill that's going to help millennials that are priced out. It's going to help new Canadians that are moving into our country, who we need in our country—partly because of our aging population, partly because diversity is one of the best things going for Canada. We need more diversity, not less diversity. But it's also going to help seniors that need to downsize but are unable to find a home that they can afford in a way that they would like. This is a very, very, very good bill.

We're doing the work on agriculture. We're doing the work on the environment. We also need to do the work on housing. This is a bill that will help get that done. I hope all members support every schedule of Bill 39. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? MPP Bell.

1340

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Schedule 2 is a deeply problematic schedule. I first want to respond to some of the comments that I heard from the MPPs opposite. People in Toronto did not vote for Tory to be a king. John Tory did not run on saying that he wanted to bring in minority rule when he ran for office. People did not vote for the Premier to bring in minority rule because the Ontario government—the Ford government—did not campaign on bringing in minority rule across the municipalities. What people did vote for is for their councillor to do their job and represent them at city hall in Toronto and Ottawa. That's what people voted for their councillor to do, and their councillor's ability to do that is stripped when Mayor Tory can bring in a motion and pass it with just eight city council votes.

I want to reference the assurances that MPP McGregor brought in about farmland and the government's insistence that they are concerned about farmland. This is what the Ontario Federation of Agriculture said in their written submission to Bill 39: "When agricultural land is developed, it is lost forever. Ontario is losing some of its most productive agricultural land to pressures for urbanization and growth

enabled by provincial policies and tools. If our province plans to continue to grow and prosper, we must also have the plan to protect Ontario's position to produce food, fibre and fuel for the people of this province and beyond.

"OFA, DRFA and YRFA"—that's the Durham and the York Region Federations of Agriculture—"are opposed to the repealing of the Duffins Rouge agricultural protection act (DRAPA) to 'assist in removing barriers to building much-needed housing.' DRAPA should remain intact."

That's what the federation of agriculture is telling the Ford government right now, that's what they want you to do, and they're the ones that are representing farming interests all across Ontario. They're saying repeal schedule 2.

I'm very concerned about schedule 2. I've received hundreds and hundreds of emails about it—so have you. Many of you have had protests outside your offices. Hundreds of people have come out saying, "What are you doing? You did not campaign on opening up the greenbelt, and now you're opening up the greenbelt."

And it's very important that we look at who is benefiting from this decision to repeal the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act. I have been struck by the maps that have been created that show how much land one of the government's biggest Conservative donors, the De Gasperis family, has bought over the last 15 years—some of it in the last two years when this government has been in power—and how it so closely aligns the Duffins Rouge agricultural area that's being taken out of the greenbelt and being opened up to allow for development. I'm absolutely struck by that. Just recently, four properties bought after the greenbelt's creation included two purchased properties, one in 2016 and two others in 2020. Now, these properties, when they are zoned for farmland, you and I both know, are cheap because you cannot develop on them. The whole reason they're cheap is because we want to spur and keep the farmland that we have.

So this family came in, bought them cheap, and, through some mysterious coincidence, it just so happens that all this area is now being opened for development. Which means this family, the De Gasperis family, is looking at making untold profit—untold profit—because of schedule 2. They get to buy the farmland cheap when it's zoned to be protected, and now they get to develop it or sell it for untold profit. It's really quite shocking. People from all sides—the Liberals, the Greens, the NDP—asked questions to the minister about who knew before you opened up this greenbelt. Who knew? Because the public didn't know. You didn't run on this. You didn't say, "We're going to open up the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve during the election."

It makes you wonder: Maybe some people knew. It really does make you wonder. That's why we are asking the Auditor General to investigate. That's why Mike Schreiner is asking the Integrity Commissioner to investigate. Because people want to know, is this just a magical coincidence or is it collusion? Is it just happy chance, or is some criminal act happening here? People have genuine questions about that. It is extremely concerning that this is happening.

What we do know for sure is that when we open up this farmland for development, it is gone for good. What we also know is that it will impact our farming sector and it will impact how much land is available to grow food and fuel for us.

I have serious reservations—actually, I know for sure that we do not need to open up this land for development in order to achieve our housing affordability goals, and the reason we know this is because this government’s own Housing Affordability Task Force said so. They were adamant. They never talked about conservation authorities and the need to gut them, they never talked about getting rid of upper-tier municipalities’ authority to plan, and they never talked about opening up the greenbelt in order to achieve our housing affordability goals and our housing supply goals. They never talked about it, and neither did this government before the election.

I reviewed—I hope you did too—the submissions that came in on Bill 39, and it’s quite a list of organizations that are opposed. There are thousands of emails from citizens, but organizations are also opposed. CCLA is opposed. Parks Canada is opposed. Former mayors of the city of Toronto are opposed. Environmental groups are opposed. The Archdiocese of Toronto is opposed. The Canadian Environmental Law Association is opposed. Friends of the Golden Horseshoe is opposed. Current city councillors are opposed. The Greenbelt Foundation is opposed. The Federation of North Toronto Residents’ Associations is opposed. The Federation of South Toronto Residents’ Associations is opposed. Ecology Ottawa is opposed. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is opposed. City planners are opposed. The Ontario Public School Boards’ Association is opposed. Thousands and thousands of people are opposed to this government’s decision to reverse all the promises you made before the election in order to open up the greenbelt to help—what we know for sure is that it’s going to help some of your biggest PC Party donors, who might or might not have been given an individualized heads-up: “Hey, guys, you may as well buy this property now. It’s super cheap. No one else knows we’re going to open it up, but we’re giving you a heads-up.” I wonder if that conversation happened. Hopefully the Integrity Commissioner will look into that, and hopefully the Auditor General will look into that as well, because it’s a question that a lot of people are thinking about right now. It’s a genuine question: Who knew, and when? The public didn’t know.

This is what we also know: Ontario can address its housing affordability crisis and its housing supply issues without building on greenbelt land and farmland.

If this government was truly serious about addressing our housing affordability crisis, this government would move forward on building missing middle and going a step further, with ending exclusionary zoning; this government would move forward on building more housing near transit; this government would build more housing on public land. You’ve got over 6,000 properties that TMU, the university, has identified as being good sites for affordable housing. That’s a better solution. It’s very concerning.

What I also know is that this government refuses to bring in real rent control so that those people you talk about who

are living in basements—maybe not even their own parents’ basement, but someone else’s basement—can actually save up for a down payment, because they don’t have to spend \$1,500 to \$2,000 a month on rent, so they can actually get that down payment and buy that home. I don’t see you doing anything on that.

And I don’t see you doing enough on making housing cheaper so that first-time homebuyers can buy a home and compete with an investor—when there are caps on how many homes an investor can own. Right now, a first-time homebuyer can’t compete. They can’t access equity from homes they already own to compete. They’ve got to save up that money with income. They can’t do it. Where is this government’s plan to make it harder for someone who already owns 15 homes to buy their 16th home? You know that’s an issue. It’s very concerning.

I urge you to repeal schedule 2. It’s going to harm farmland, and it’s not going to help housing affordability.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Recorded vote, Chair.

1350

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** A recorded vote is asked for.

Shall schedule 2 carry?

#### Ayes

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

#### Nays

Bell, Burch, McMahon.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Schedule 2 is carried. Moving onto schedule 3, section 1, I believe we have a notice. Is there any debate? MPP Burch.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Being from Niagara, I really have to comment on this: This government, as I pointed out a number of times, in 2019 threw the whole municipal scene into chaos once again in having a review of regional governance. Of course, the worry that people have is that this government would get into forced amalgamations, which they were threatening at the time. Now, that review cost taxpayers close to \$200,000 and, to this day, it’s a secret the government is keeping in the backroom, and it’s the same backroom that John Tory met with the Premier in. But we haven’t seen this report and you have to assume it’s because the government didn’t like what was in the report.

Here we all are again. Once again, the Conservative government decides to interfere with the democratic processes of municipalities, and without having said anything prior to the municipal election. So the municipal election happens, and the regional municipalities that have already been thwarted by this government in their attempt to have at-large elections for chair—now the government decides you can’t even have the elected councillors choose your

chair; now the Premier is going to choose who the chair of those municipalities are and they're going to appoint yet another facilitator for more navel-gazing. Maybe this time they'll find something they want to hear, or I'm sure they'll keep the report secret.

But not only is it undemocratic, it causes a lot of anxiety in areas like Niagara where we are dealing with an actual housing crisis. No one can explain what this has to do with housing. What we do know is what the government is setting up, through either the strong-mayors system or this appointment of regional chairs, is really just a delivery system for what they call their provincial priorities, which seem to be enriching their friends and increasing donations to the Ontario PC Party. It has nothing to do with housing. They can't point to how it could possibly increase the stock of housing. As a matter of fact, there are plenty of arguments—and we heard some of them over the committee hearings—that it will actually slow down the way municipalities operate because it will divide councils and it will divide regional councils. I can tell you that already, in Niagara, it has caused divisions.

I know the players, obviously, in Niagara. There was an actual campaign ongoing to elect among the regional councillors a regional chair, and that's what voters understood would happen when they went to the polls. Once again, this government walks in after an election, after not mentioning any of its plans, and changes everything and throws everything into confusion. Confusion is not good for decision-making. We need decisions made, and we need to treat municipalities as partners if we're going to work on the housing crisis.

This is going to backfire. It's already created animosity and divisions in councils and, like the strong-mayor provision, it is deeply undemocratic and problematic. So we would recommend that everyone on this committee votes against it. Like the strong-mayor legislation, this is going to follow this government around, these undemocratic practices that started with an attempt to suspend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms with respect to collective bargaining, interfering in a municipal election, now introducing minority rule for the first time in North America. These are moves by this government that are going to follow it around for the next four years. I would highly recommend that all members of this committee think very, very carefully before supporting this section.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate on schedule 3, section 1? MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I will have some amendments coming as well on this.

Again, as I said this morning, earlier, this is unnecessary. That's the word of the day: unnecessary. It's the same as bulldozing into farmland. These are unnecessary extra powers given to the mayors of two cities. One city, we know, does not want it. The new mayor of Ottawa has said—and I believe the outgoing mayor said the same thing—they don't want it. They don't need it. They work on collegial collaboration, camaraderie, and they do that—that's how you build teams. You don't build teams by being dictators and coming in and ramming ideas and

initiatives down people's throats; you work together collaboratively.

Any of you who were on councils before, I'm sure you did the same. As I said, I was on Toronto city council for eight glorious years under two different mayors: the previous mayor, Rob Ford, rest in peace—quite tumultuous, and entertaining, I guess—and the current, Mayor Tory. We got things done. We have many things to be proud of. And, actually, I worked very well with our Premier when he voted on the Toronto Green Standard and our TransformTO climate change mitigation and adaptation plan and many things collaboratively, together. We did not have the strong-mayor plan; we did not need it, because you don't need it. One does not need it if one wants to work well with one's colleagues.

I've heard this time and time again, and honestly, I actually find it kind of lame, just saying that the mayor garnered more votes across the city of Toronto than any other councillor—obviously. He's running for mayor. The councillors are not running across the city. They're running in their riding, so the most they could get is about 120,000 votes—not even. That is just the most ridiculous argument I have heard.

As I said, I worked with the current mayor and we worked well together, without the strong-mayor powers. So it's completely unnecessary. I would argue, if you were the new politician, as some of you are here—the same as me. We're representing our residents, right? We work for the people. It's public service. All of a sudden we're denied that right and then I can't represent my residents because it's minority rule and my voice doesn't matter? That's unfair, unfounded, unnecessary.

I don't know where this came from. It's just, like, pulled out of a hat. The Premier didn't run on it. The mayor didn't run on it. So why is it even here? And then it's sandwiched in with destroying our farmland, which is ridiculous too.

As we know, it's never been done in North America, this minority rule. We would be the first to do that. Honestly, the world is looking at us with this highly undemocratic move. It's not a good look. It's not a good look for Toronto; it's not a good look for Ontario. Ottawa is rising above it and Ottawa council moved a resolution. They don't want to use it, so that's interesting—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Pardon me? If you need a nap, if the job's getting too tough for you, there are couches for you to have a nap, MPP—

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Point of order.

1400

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Well, that actually was rude.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Through the Chair, MPP McMahon, please.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Yes. I would argue, Chair Scott, that was—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I have the floor, thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** There's a point of order. MPP McGregor, please.

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Pursuant to standing order 25(b): The member is directing her speech to matters other than the subject for discussion. I would just urge the Chair to caution the member to bring her debate back to the bill at hand.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** It is a valid point of order. I know, MPP McMahon—

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you. My apologies.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** That's okay. We're speaking to schedule 3, I'll just remind everyone—

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Sure. I was just distracted by the loud yawn from my colleague across the way, which I found quite disrespectful. Thank you, Chair Scott, for intervening on that rudeness.

With that, I would just say I'm all for building housing. My track record is very strong at Toronto city hall—prior to, as a community leader, eight years at city hall, and afterwards, when I worked for an organization that was pushing for innovative housing on the waterfront. So I have a very strong record on housing—YIMBY here. We don't need strong-mayor powers to do this.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate or discussion? MPP Bell.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'm very concerned about schedule 3, the Municipal Act, 2001, that's in Bill 39. I have a few reasons why I'm concerned about it. Number one, bringing in minority rule to any municipality across Ontario—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Bell, I just have to clarify that we're speaking to section 1 of schedule 3, which is about the regional chairs.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Oh, it's the regional chairs part. Okay. I'm going to pass. I'm going to reserve my comments for the next section, and I'll have a lot.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate?

Are the members ready to vote on schedule 3, section 1?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'd ask for a recorded vote, please, Chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Sure. Recorded vote.

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Too late.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** He's not too late.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Can we do a recorded vote for every one?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** We can do a recorded vote for every one.

We're going to vote on schedule 3, section 1.

#### Ayes

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

#### Nays

Bell, Burch, McMahon.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Schedule 3, section 1, is carried.

I'm now asking for agreement for schedule 3—if we can bundle sections 2 to 7, please. Agreed? Thank you.

Is there any debate on the bundled sections I just mentioned, 2 to 7? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote? Shall schedule 3, sections 2 to 7, carry—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Yes. They're all recorded going forward.

#### Ayes

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

#### Nays

Bell, Burch, McMahon.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Carried.

Moving on to schedule 3, section 8: I believe we have amendment number 2, and I look to MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I move that section 8 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection to section 284.11.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001:

“Powers re bylaws

“Non-application to city of Ottawa

“(0.1) This section does not apply to the city of Ottawa.”

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Debate? MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I would just say that the city of Ottawa put forth a resolution: They do not want to be included in this bill, as many people across Ontario do not want to be included in this bill. So I am moving this to honour their resolution and to stand up for democracy.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate or discussion? MPP Burch, please.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** We will be supporting this amendment. I just want to make clear that we are not in support of any section of this bill. We don't believe it's salvageable at all, but voting against strong-mayor powers for the city of Ottawa is consistent with that, so we will be supporting MPP McMahon's amendment.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Any further debate or discussion? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote on amendment number 2?

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Is it a recorded vote?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** They're all recorded going forward.

#### Ayes

Bell, Burch, McMahon.

#### Nays

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I declare amendment number 2 lost.

We're moving now onto amendment number 3. I now look to MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Back up again. I move that section 8 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out subsection 284.11.3—this is the right one, right? Hold on. Sorry. Yes, that's the right one.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Do you want to start from the top again, please?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Yes, sorry—so many amendments to try and clean this up.

I move that section 8 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by striking out subsection 284.11.1(3) of the Municipal Act, 2001 and substituting the following:

“Same

“(3) The head of council shall, in accordance with the regulations, provide to the clerk and to each member of council,

“(a) a copy of any by-law proposed under subsection (2);

“(b) the head of council's reasons for the proposal; and

“(c) a report from municipal staff containing their analysis and recommendations on the proposed by-law.”

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Debate? MPP McMahon, do you want to debate?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Again, this is similar to what I moved this morning, except that was the City of Toronto Act and this is the Municipal Act. Again, it's about accountability and transparency. I don't even want to bring this here because we shouldn't have this bill here, but we do, and so I'm just trying to add some accountability to it. I'm thanking you in advance for your strong support, as you always do—you're so great in supporting me.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate or discussion? Seeing none—yes, MPP McGregor.

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Yes, I just note, under the proposal, the mayors already have to provide a written explanation for any time that they use the powers. This would be very duplicative. I would ask all members to vote against this motion. It really goes to the heart that, with our NDP and our Liberal friends, they've never seen a regulation they didn't want to duplicate or a tax they didn't want to raise. But this is completely duplicative and counter to its intended purpose. We'll be voting it down—or I'll be voting it down.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Any further debate or discussion? Seeing none—oh, MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Sure, and I would just say, if you are as supportive of it, what is wrong with extra protections and just adding some more accountability there and reiterating the idea? I mean, why not?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? MPP Thanigasalam.

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** This proposal from the opposition will only add more red tape. We don't need more red tape. We don't need more reports. We need more shovels in the ground.

1410

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Any further debate or discussion? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote? All the votes are recorded, just a reminder.

**Ayes**

McMahon.

**Nays**

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I declare the amendment lost.

Shall schedule 3, section 8 carry? Is there debate?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Sorry, I want to speak to schedule 3 overall. I don't want to miss it.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** This is not the spot.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** It's the next one, right?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** This is schedule 3, section 8. Any debate or discussion? All those in favour of schedule 3, section 8, please raise their hands.

**Ayes**

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Bell, Burch, McMahon.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Schedule 3, section 8, is carried.

Under schedule 3, I ask the members if we can bundle section 9 and section 10. All in agreement? Thank you.

Any debate on schedule 3, sections 9 and 10? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote? All those in favour of schedule 3, sections 9 and 10, please raise their hands.

**Ayes**

Grewal, Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Bell, Burch, McMahon.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Schedule 3, sections 9 to 10, carried.

Now moving on to schedule 3. Any debate or discussion? MPP Bell.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'm very concerned—in fact, alarmed—about schedule 3 as a whole. The piece I want to speak to is this government's move to expand strong-mayor powers to any municipality that they want, so what that looks like

is a municipality's mayor could have the power to develop and pass their budget with just one-third support. They can appoint heads of departments, like Toronto and Ottawa are doing.

What this bill does is it allows mayors to bring in legislation, any legislation they want, and pass it with just one third of city council support. That is very troubling. It would mean that we would be the first region in North America that allowed mayors to pass legislation with just one third of city council support. It flies in the face of representative democracy and majority rule. It is alarming.

What I find so troubling about this schedule is the government doesn't define what municipalities are going to get these strong-mayor powers. AMO has come out, representing 444 municipalities, overwhelmingly opposed to Bill 3 and Bill 39. Its board has said, "Unanimously, we are opposed to Bill 3." Yet this government is looking at saying, "We're going to decide what municipalities can move forward on strong-mayor powers through regulation."

And what's also troubling is that this government—you haven't as yet defined what the provincial priorities even are. We don't even know what they are. That is extremely concerning as well. Why don't you define them in regulation or law? It's extremely troubling.

People want to know, municipalities want to know: What municipalities are you going to target next? You're giving yourselves all these powers. Who's going to have minority rule next? It's not written down. But you're giving yourself the power to do that in this legislation. It's extremely undemocratic. Minority rule is not an example of representative democracy. It's extremely concerning. I urge you to vote against schedule 3 of this bill, and I urge you to vote against and repeal Bill 39. It's a terrible bill.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate, discussion? MPP Sabawy.

**Mr. Sherif Sabawy:** Again, we keep talking about the strong-mayor powers. As we explained multiple times, it's a tool in the tool box of the mayors, because the government said we are intending to give them target housing goals every year and they have to try to achieve those goals. So it's a tool. They don't have to use it. They can choose to use it or not use it, but they know that at the end of the year the provincial government is going to ask them how they did on the housing targets they were mandated to deliver. Again, it's a tool—and with accountability comes authority. If we are going to try to push the targets, we have to give them the tools to be able to achieve those targets. As we all know, the media and everybody looks to the mayors as the obstacle to getting the housing crisis solved when sometimes they actually do not have the authority to push the agenda and go forward. So I think the government did a great job in giving them that tool. They have the right to choose to use it or not use it, depending on the circumstances, but they know now that they are going to be asked at the end of the year about their achievements on the provincial mandates. In my opinion, giving it to Toronto or Ottawa or any other jurisdiction—it's

going to depend on how it's going to be doing in those two areas. We'll see. If it's working, then it's going to be expanded.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Burch.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Chair, I just want to point out, I think my friend got the saying wrong. It's "with great power comes great responsibility"—at least that's what Spider-Man says.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

**Ayes**

Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Bell, Burch, McMahan.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Schedule 3 is carried.

We will now return to section 1 of the bill. Is there any debate on section 1 of the bill? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

**Ayes**

Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Bell, Burch, McMahan.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I declare section 1 carried.

Moving on to section 2 of the bill: Is there any debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote?

**Ayes**

Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Bell, Burch, McMahan.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Section 2 is carried.

We're moving to section 3 of the bill. Is there any debate? MPP Bell.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This section is about the title of the bill, the Better Municipal Governance Act. That is not an appropriate name for this bill. Violation of democracy governance act, maybe; creation of kings governance act; give away the greenbelt governance act—there are a lot of different names that this bill should be called. It shouldn't be called the Better Municipal Governance Act because it does anything but the sort.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? I see no further debate. Are the members ready to vote?

**Ayes**

Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Bell, Burch, McMahan.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Section 3 is carried. Shall the title of the bill carry? Any debate or discussion? Are the members ready to vote?

**Ayes**

Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Bell, Burch, McMahan.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** The title is carried. Shall Bill 39 carry? Any debate or discussion?

**Ayes**

Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Bell, Burch, McMahan.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Bill 39 is carried. Shall I report the bill to the House? Yes, there's a recorded vote.

**Ayes**

Holland, McGregor, Pang, Sabawy, Laura Smith, Thanigasalam.

**Nays**

Bell, Burch, McMahan.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Bill 39 will be reported back to the House.

There being no further business, this committee now stands adjourned. Thank you, everyone.

*The committee adjourned at 1422.*

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